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SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

EUR/RPM PETER SCHROEDER AND L/T FRANK HOLLERAN

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: FRENCH PLAN FOR RATIFICATION OF NATO ENLARGEMENT
BEFORE 2009 NATO SUMMIT

REF: STATE 106321

¶1. (U) Sensitive but Unclassified - not for internet distribution.

¶2. (SBU) The MFA wants the French Parliament to approve NATO membership for Croatia and Albania before the April 2009 NATO summit in Strasbourg-Kehl, according to DAS-equivalent for the Balkans, Thierry Guichoux, who discussed ratification with Poloff on September 19. Guichoux noted parliament determines the calendar for ratification. He added that the MFA had even encouraged the Croatian and Albanian governments to deliver a demarche directly to the French parliament to help speed the process. French parliamentary contacts told us that while no date has yet been set for the debate and vote on the latest round of NATO enlargement, the parliament is aware that it is a GOF priority for action before the April NATO summit. (Comment: The French President's party controls majorities in both houses of French parliament; therefore we do not anticipate difficulties in the ratification process which we expect to occur before April 2009).

STAPLETON